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Which accelerated nursing students withdraw and fail in their first year of a Bachelor of Nursing (BN)?

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Abstract

Accelerated students in nursing have their first experience of university entering into second year subjects such as pharmacology. These accelerated students may have a Diploma of Nursing or equivalent experience or may be domestic or international graduates in any subject area. We have previously shown that the withdrawal rates are higher for accelerated than traditional students. We now show that of the accelerated students, it is only the diploma students that have difficulty transitioning to a BN.

Background: At many Universities, including QUT, accelerated students are admitted directly into the second year of nursing courses, and study with the second year traditional students. The accelerated students may have a Diploma of Nursing or equivalent experience or they may be domestic or international graduates in any subject area. We have previously shown that the withdrawal rates of the accelerated students in the pharmacology unit were higher than for the traditional students in both 2009 (accelerated; 7% versus traditional; 4%: $p < 0.05$ after odd-ratio analysis) and 2010 (8.3% vs 1%: $p < 0.05$) (Schaffer, Doggrell & Dallemange, 2012).

Aim: The aims were to determine which accelerated students were at risk of withdrawing or failing the unit.

Results: None of the international or domestic graduate accelerated students withdrew from the pharmacology unit, and their failure rates were low ($< 10\%$). In contrast, the withdrawal and failure rates for the diploma students were between 11.9 and 19.4% (Table 1).

Table 1. Attrition and failure rates of accelerated students

International graduates				Domestic graduates			Diploma or equivalent experience		
Year	Number	Withdrew (%)	Failed (%)	Number	Withdrew (%)	Failed (%)	Number	Withdrew (%)	Failed (%)
2009	51	0%	3.9%	33	0%	3.0%	62	11.9%	19.4%
2010	39	0%	0%	23	0%	8.7%	43	18.6%	16.3%

Discussion: Our analysis shows that international and domestic graduate accelerated students appear to have the skills necessary to directly transition into a second year pharmacology unit of a nursing degree, but about a third of the diploma students do not. Thus, the diploma students, but not the graduates, require help when transitioning into the second year of a BN.

Reference

Schaffer, S., Doggrell S. A., Dallemagne C. (2012). Transferring a successful strategy for supporting accelerated nursing students from a small to a large cohort. Retrieved from http://fyhe.com.au/past_papers/papers12/Papers/7F.pdf